

Assembly shuts doors on visitors till March 20

Ban may be extended or lifted depending on coronavirus situation; session to continue till March-end, says Speaker

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

17/3/20

THE public will not be allowed into the viewers' gallery of the Karnataka Assembly starting Tuesday. As precautionary measures in view of COVID-19, Speaker Vishweswara Hegde Kageri ordered a ban on visitors and appealed to the members not to send requests for passes. Passes for public and Speaker's galleries will not be issued from Tuesday till Friday, March 20.

Depending on the situation, the ban may either be lifted or extended. "Keeping in mind the government's efforts to avoid gathering of people in the wake of coronavirus, entry of public in the gallery will be banned from March 17-20," the Speaker said. The House will, however, function regularly with secretariat officials, bureaucrats, media person and legislators attending.

Despite a state government order to begin thermal screening at public offices, Vidhana Soudha is yet to set up the facility at its entrance. On Monday, no thermal scanners or screening facilities were seen at the secretariat. Though there was



Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa holds a meeting with Medical Education Minister Dr K Sudhakar and Deputy Chief Minister Govind Karjol to assess the situation in the wake of coronavirus outbreak, at Vidhana Soudha on Monday (NAGARAJA GADEKAL)

CM holds video conference with DCs

Bengaluru: Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa held a video conference with deputy commissioners of all districts on Monday to oversee implementation of orders issued by state government to check the spread of COVID-19 in the state. Home Minister Basavaraja Bommai, Chief Secretary T M Vijayabhaskar and other senior officers were also present. Yediyurappa said, "The entry of tourists is prohibited in Mandya, Mysuru, Vijayapura, Ballari, Koppal and Kodagu districts. Home stays have to be under scrutiny. Those who have returned from foreign tours should be screened thoroughly and district-level task force meetings have to be conducted on a daily basis." **ENS**

speculation that the session may be curtailed due to government guidelines on maintaining social distance, the session will continue till the month-

end, as scheduled. In fact, the House is yet to begin the discussion on the State budget 2020-2021 that needs to be passed before March 31.

MLCs unhappy with state's preparedness on COVID-19

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

MEMBERS of the Legislative Council expressed displeasure over measures taken by the state government to tackle coronavirus in the state.

During a discussion on the epidemic in the Council on Monday, leader of the opposition SR Patil said that the first death due to COVID-19 was in Karnataka and that reflected the preparedness of the state government. "It is a blot on the state's health department. If proper measures were in place, the virus would not have spread to so many people. The government should think of isolating all travellers, including Indians, coming from other countries," he said, adding that the government should release special grants.

MLC Srikante Gowda said, "It's high time Karnataka took a leaf out of Kerala's book to contain the virus. Even today, the staff at the airport are con-

ducting checks with a casual approach."

Forest Minister Anand Singh expressed concern over students from the state stranded at Milan airport. "About 60 students, including my daughter, are stranded. The government should intervene and help students and others from Karnataka, who are stranded."

Health Minister B Sriramulu said that he is in touch with the External Affairs Ministry to bring back those from Karnataka. "The government has so far spent Rs 36 crore on steps taken to prevent COVID-19. There is no dearth of masks or sanitisers and we have stocks for another three months. Masks will be made available in Jan Aushadhi Kendras," he said.

"The 71 people who attended the funeral of the 76-year-old man who died in Kalaburagi were kept in isolation. Leaves have been cancelled for doctors and they are being sent on deputation to places where their services are required," he added.

LETTER / ADDRESS : DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT : DATE :

NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER : DATE OF THE NEWS PAPER : PAGE NO. : PAGE :